Statement

The following steps have been taken to improve the telephone service

1. Introduction of sophisticated electronic telephone exchanges to avoid problems inherent with electromagnetic switching equipment used hitherto.
2. Replacement of life expired equipment.
3. Special testing of exchange equipment particularly inter-exchange junctions is being undertaken to improve inter-exchange working.
4. Working of air-conditioning plants in various exchanges is being regularly monitored to ensure proper working.
5. Laying of new junction, primary and secondary cables in ducts to protect them from external damages.
6. Pressurisation of primary, secondary and junction cables to minimise cable break-down faults.
7. Use of jelly filled cables in the distribution network to entry of water in the cables to avoid faults.
8. Cable trenches are being flooded before being closed so as to detect any damage during trenching or laying of the cables. The public is being asked to inform Telephone Department before they take up digging on 'dial before dig' service so as to keep liasion with other agencies who are engaged in digging.
9. Extensive patrolling of cable routes to detect any digging operations and to take precautionary measures to avoid damage to cables.
10. Provision of high grade junction circuits on Pulse Code Modulation, Coaxial and microwave media to provide better quality and more dependable services.
11. Rehabilitaiton of subscribers' fittings and the D.P. boxes to minimise faults on the line.
12. Replacemnet of overhead wires by insulated drop wires to avoid faults due to kite strings, bird nests etc. which lead to contact or low insulation faults.
13. Use of improved telephone instruments.
14. Replacement of aluminium wires in the fittings at the subscribers premises by copper wires to avoid break faults.
15. Computerisation of cable records and fault repair service to bring down duration of faults.
16. Monitoring of the automanual service and trunk service is being carried out so as to ensure prompt response on these services.
17. Public grievance cells have been opened at GMs headquarters and AMs offices to provide single outlet attention to the subscribers.
18. Formation of interutility coordination boards to avoid damage to cables.

Restriction on foreign tourists to visit Meghalaya

1649. SHRI JERLIE E. TARIANG: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for continuing the restricted permit system for foreign tourists to Meghalaya;

(b) whether it is a fact that Meghalaya is the most peaceful state in the North-East region and much less sensitive than the State of Jammu and Kashmir;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the State of Meghalaya has great potential for earning revenue and foreign exchange from tourism; and

(d) if so, what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) In the interest of national security Meghalaya

which has been declared as a Restricted Area under Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963, continues as such.

(c) and (b) In view of its tourist potential Foreign tourists in groups sponsored by the recognised Indian travel agencies are permitted to visit Shillong in Meghalaya subject to certain conditions prescribed in this regard.

Announcement of a New Newsprint Policy

1650. SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) when the newsprint policy was announced last;

(b) since when the announcement of a new newsprint policy has become due;

(c) what are the reasons for delay in announcing the policy; and

(d) by when it is likely to be announced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (d) Newsprint Allocation Policy was earlier announced on annual basis and the policy for the year 1984-85 was announced on 21st July, 1984. The Policy for 1985-86 could not be announced as entire gamut of distribution of newsprint with a view to removing certain lacunae engaged the attention of the Government. The matter has since been finalised and the Policy applicable for the years 1986-87 and 1987-88 was announced in the Lok Sabha on 13-11-1986 and in Rajya Sabha on 17-11-1986.

Collaboration with Natherlands in the sale and manufacture of telecommunications equipment

1651. SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHAKRISHNA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Netherlands Government has offered to cooperate in the sale and the licenced production of equipment with co-operation in common research activities, exchange of technologies and shared training facilities so far to enable India to achieve greater self-reliance in telecommunications;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard; and

(c) what is the present state of the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) In the Third Meeting of the Indo-Netherlands Joint Commission in April, 1986, held in Delhi, it was agreed by both sides that excellent scope exists between the two countries to increase cooperation in the field of Telecommunications. Netherlands side has offered technical cooperation and assistance in the areas of Network Development and Planning, Rural Telecom Development and Research & Development.

(b) and (c) These proposals are under the consideration of Government.

Indian request for co-operation in nuclear safety

1652. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has reiterated that the nuclear plants around the world are not safe and has urged for greater cooperation, especially between developing and developed nations on unclear safety, as reported in the Indian Express of 13th October, 1986; and

(b) if so, what further steps Government of India proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY, ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) No, Sir.